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Common Sense For Common Wealth

JACK CUTTER
*examines the
Election Handbook
for the
Acland Brigade*

and Articles by
HINLEY ATKINSON,
MARY SUTHERLAND,
HAROLD CROFT, etc.

The Nomorewar Democrat

or the

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Parties Must Get Busy NOW

By HINLEY ATKINSON

In political and newspaper circles it is no longer a matter for doubt that following the now rapidly approaching end of the war, a Parliamentary General Election will be held within a few months—perhaps only a few weeks.

To the Labour Party this period will come as a challenging opportunity to assert its will to power in national and local government.

The big and urgent question for every constituency Party is, *are we ready to take advantage of this challenging opportunity?* Only the novice in politics suffers from the delusion that election preparation begins when Parliament is dissolved or local authority members end their term of office. The Party experienced in fighting elections knows that even the best election opportunity is fleeting, and is only of value in so far as the Party is in readiness to exploit it.

We must also take note of the fact that these coming elections find us with our readiness for elections considerably impaired by the circumstances of war.

For constituency and local Parties, the basic factor in a state of readiness for the elections is the existence of a sufficient number of active, trained

members. No Party, whatever its traditions from pre-war years, will be in readiness to plan and conduct an effective campaign without them. The first important decision for every Party is therefore, to increase and train its membership for the work of an election campaign. And *NOW* is the time to begin. Wishful thinking that "workers will turn up at the time" is the negation of organisation. Such workers are welcome and useful—if they come! But how often they *don't*! The important fact is that every Party needs a core of alert and trained members who are able to lead and enthuse other members and helpers because they know the jobs to be done and how to do them effectively.

In the meantime the most valuable training for election work is to get members busy with the ordinary jobs of Party organisation. The enrolment of new members, collection of contributions, distribution and sales of literature, and not least the setting up or livening of Ward Committees are the two jobs most necessary in preparing the Party for the election campaigns. They build up the Party and give practical training to members.

Every Party which intends to fight its election effectively must get ready *now*.

COMMON SENSE for COMMON WEALTH

By JACK CUTTER

A month or two ago the Secretary of a Divisional Labour Party received a letter from the local Secretary of the Common Wealth Party in which the writer, after pointing out all the faults of the Labour Party, recoiled in horror from the prospect of more than one "Progressive" candidate in that constituency at the next election.

The D.L.P. secretary, with some pardonable asperity, pointed out in reply that there had been a first-class Labour Candidate selected in the Constituency for a number of years and, therefore, if the Common Wealters wanted to save themselves an attack of the horrors all they had to do was to refrain from opposing the only progressive candidate in the field.

A few days later Common Wealth decided to nominate a candidate in that constituency, indicating that Common Wealth had completed its recoil and come back on the rebound.

This constituency is represented by a Tory, but it was once won by Labour and the chances are that, given a clear field, Labour will win it again at the next election. Those chances are, of course, narrowed to some extent by the presence of a Common Wealth candidate. Therefore, the only people who can feel pleased about the adoption of a Common Wealth candidate are the Tories. A few miles away, another constituency, also represented at present by a Tory and with a Labour candidate selected years ago, a Common Wealth candidate has emerged to the satisfaction of the local Tory organisation.

In preparation for these and other contests Common Wealth has published an Election Handbook, with an introduction, which states: "We have a definite job to do, which is getting the bad M.P.s out." This leads me to the conclusion that there must be a special brand of Common Wealth logic which convinces them that the best way to get bad M.P.s out is to organise campaigns which will keep them in. I don't profess to understand their reasoning. I only, as the B.B.C. speakers say, report the facts.

Common Wealth's instructions to its starry-eyed canvassers deserve a wider publicity than they would otherwise receive if I left them nestling among the green pages of the "Election Handbook." This one will bring tears of joy to your tired old eyes. It is Instruction No. 5:

"Be polite, no matter what. A possible line of approach would be:

"Good evening. I am sorry to trouble you. Are you Mrs. Smith? I wonder if you can help me to check up on the register of voters. Is Mr. Smith here and is there anyone else in the household? I am enquiring on behalf of Common Wealth, etc., etc."

The instruction goes on to advise the canvasser not to argue. "If you suspect," it says, "that you are up against someone who knows a lot more about, say, economics, than you do, do not let him beat you on ground of his own choosing; make it clear that your belief in Common Wealth is based upon its fundamental principles . . ."

That's the stuff, girls. Stick to fundamental principles and never mind such trivialities as economics.

On the page facing these instructions is a sample of a Canvass Record Card, with spaces for the canvass results headed: "C.W." "Con." "Lab." "Lib." "D." It is probably not without significance that the space headed "Lab." is much the widest of the lot indicating the compiler's anticipation that the canvasser will need more room for the figures in that column.

Most interesting of all are the facsimiles of the election forms. It is quite obvious that the compiler has secured one of the Labour Party's famous parcels of election forms and reproduced them faithfully, even to the style of type! The compiler does not trouble to acknowledge the source of his or her inspiration, but we now rectify the omission with a graceful bow for this sincerest form of flattery.

After all, if Common Wealth endeavours to pinch our policy, our members, our electoral opportunities

(Concluded on page 8)

AROUND THE PARTIES

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE

All the constituencies in North Staffordshire, most of which are Labour strongholds, are gathering their forces together to meet coming events. A recent Conference of Trade Union Representatives, addressed by Harry Wickham, not only expressed growing interest in political action, but made arrangements for development work. The Transport and General Workers' Union, the A.E.U., and the E.T.U. are arranging Conferences of Branch Officers, Workers' Committees and Shop Stewards for the purpose of building up Party strength.

Key workers in the area are to attend a two-session School on the "Conduct of an Election" in November, prompted by a desire to increase efficiency.

In Burslem, the Development Campaign is proceeding apace, many meetings have been held with Loud Speaker equipment. Large audiences have had distributed to them leaflets on Workers' Compensation and Application for Membership Forms.

SEDGEFIELD

An attractively printed invitation comes to hand from the Sedgfield Divisional Federation of Labour Women's Sections reminding me that they are celebrating their Twenty-first Anniversary in the Broom Hall on October 3rd. It is signed by Mrs. Florence McManners, who was appointed and has continued, as Secretary from the date of its formation.

Following the redistribution of Parliamentary seats in the County of Durham by the Reform Act, 1918, the late Mr. Egerton Wake, National Agent, and Arthur Henderson, Secretary, explained that Sedgfield Division (240 sq. miles) and Barnard Castle Division (360 sq. miles) were clearly intended to be safe Tory seats. How propaganda and hard work, especially by our women folk, has changed this outlook. During this period both Divisions have been won for Labour on at least three occasions, and both have sitting Labour M.P.s at present.

GROWING ORGANISATION

Constituency Parties have been re-established in the Oswestry (Salop), Eddisbury (Cheshire) and Forfarshire. In all three constituencies work has been set in motion for the re-establishment of Local Labour Parties acting in conjunction with the District Organisers.

Many Local Labour Parties are now being formed or re-formed all over the country, and in particular at Beeston (Rushcliffe), Milford Haven and Neyland (Pembrokeshire), Burley-in-Wharfedale (Pudsey and Otley), Ditton (Sevenoaks), Ludlow (Salop), Wellington, Hadleigh and Oakengates (the Wrekin). Much enthusiasm is reported arising out of the approaching end of the war with its possibilities of a General Election.

HAMILTON

The Constituency Party has shown great enterprise by its organisation of Day Schools to study Party Policy. The last School held at Limekilburn, addressed by Mrs. Olive Cruchley, attracted, despite heavy rain, more than 70 students. Hamilton, at any rate, will have a membership capable of public speaking and canvassing when the General Election becomes imminent.

WELLINGBOROUGH

Mr. George White, who has recently been discharged from the R.A.S.C., has been appointed a part-time organiser for the division. Mr. White has youth on his side, which, coupled with the vigour of its very able Parliamentary candidate, Mr. G. S. Lindgren, should lead to important developments in organisation.

(Concluded from page 9)

Quite often the team which includes a member used to making speeches shows up badly alongside the novices.

Members who would not attend a Speakers' class, are often willing to take part in a Forum team. Unsuspected powers of self-expression are revealed and the new confidence that this gives will make them more valuable members of the Party in many directions, even though they never aspire to being included in a list of speakers.

To Correspondents

"That Proxy Vote"

Question: An Agent writes: "I am opposed to the proxy vote which is open to very great abuse. . . I do not feel that we, as a Party, have made the best use of our opportunity and influence in regard to the various regulations and Acts dealing with war-time elections and registration. I may be wrong, but, frankly, have we been sufficiently interested?"

Answer: We are glad our correspondent has expressed his views, partly because we can allay his concern about Headquarters' interest and because we can perhaps satisfy him as to Labour policy on the issue.

First, it can be stated that when these matters were before the Committee on Electoral Machinery (whose recommendations were the basis for Legislation) the Labour representatives—Garro-Jones, M.P., W. Glenville Hall, M.P., and the National Agent, G. R. Shepherd, were strongly against the Proxy Vote and against big extensions of postal voting because these devices corrode the secrecy of the ballot which is a precious heritage and safeguard for the electorate. Alternatively, they pressed for direct voting and introduced proposals outlining a

scheme for personal voting by the troops, at polling stations to be installed at barracks, camps and docks, for all the Services in Great Britain. (It was hoped that even in some foreign bases the scheme could be operative.)

Head Office gave detailed attention to the making of this plan. One of the members of the staff had taken a consultative part in one of the recent elections for Canadian troops in this country. His experience of their personal polling in the widely-scattered units had impressed him with the practicability of such direct voting by troops. The Secretary of the Union of Labour Organisers, Mr. H. Drinkwater, took part in our deliberations.

The Committee on Electoral Machinery did not accept our proposals. The clash of opinion was not of the usual political kind. It was really inertia towards a new idea that defeated us.

We hope to publish an article very shortly indicating how a scheme of direct polling by the Services could be operated.

To XYZ: A pedlar's licence is not required for the selling of Party pamphlets from door to door, but to comply with the Statutes a "Publishers' Authorisation" should be obtained from the Press Department of Head Office.

WEST FULHAM Divisional LABOUR PARTY

invite applications for the post of

Agent and Organiser

Salary in accordance with the Agents' National Scale. Applications, stating age, experience, Trade Union and Labour Party connections and other qualifications for the position, together with two recent references, must be returned to Mr. A. V. Clare, West Fulham Labour Party, 131 Dawes Road, Fulham, S.W.6, not later than October 14th, 1944.

NEWCASTLE CITY LABOUR PARTY

requires the services of a

Full-Time Organising Secretary

who must hold the Labour Party Agents' Proficiency Certificate.

Salary, £330 plus War Bonus.

Apply, stating age, qualifications, experience, etc., together with two references, not later than the 13th November, 1944, to the Secretary, 3 Higham Place, Newcastle-on-Tyne 2. Envelope should be endorsed "Application."

Do you wish to be a Speaker?

A series of articles to help platform aspirants by Harold Croft.

(II) Your First Chairman's Speech.

Your start as a public speaker may arise from being asked to take the chair at a small indoor or outdoor meeting.

You will feel rather excited and anxious about it, though the speech may only have to be of ten minutes' duration.

The first problem is to consider the make-up of the speech. This may not be too difficult, as there are usually only three simple parts in a chairman's speech.

Part 1. To say something about the body arranging the meeting, or for what purpose the meeting is being held.

Part 2. To refer to the subject of the address.

Part 3. To introduce the speaker.

You have to think about what you are going to say on each of these points. If at first your mind seems a blank, do not worry—it is a common experience. You have to stir up your thoughts and this can be done by writing down something however commonplace on one of the items. Do not hesitate too much, put anything down that comes, you will find that it helps you to say something else.

Methods of composing a speech differ and you will tend to use one appropriate for yourself. You may find it possible to set down some headings for a speech, or you may have a faculty for building up a brief outline of what you want to say. On the other hand it may be easiest for you to jot down at random anything that strikes you on any points, or you may find it better to begin writing systematically on each part in turn.

A MODEL OUTLINE.

First look at the following outline as an example of assembling some points in order, or as an outline summary made up from various random notes. In either case it represents a sort of model for a brief chairman's speech.

Part 1. Albion Ward Committee arranging a series of public meetings—to give residents opportunity of hearing Labour Policy. The Labour Party is growing. We have made new members here. People are looking to the future. Want better life for all.

Part 2. Subject to-night is "Public and Democratic Control." Everyone agrees—must be planning of industry and social service. But fear of Red Tape makes some people hesitate. Labour want control to be subject to the will of the people. To-night's address deals with this problem.

Part 3. Our speaker is John Harvey, a young man who is an ardent member of our Party. He has studied social questions and won commendation in a recent essay competition arranged by his Trade Union on the subject of "Social Planning." Sure we shall all learn something from him. Have pleasure in calling upon John Harvey to address the meeting.

THE THREE PARTS.

Bearing in mind for reference, the structure of the above model, you can begin to tackle the problem of building up remarks on each of the three parts of the chairman's speech you have to make.

Part 1. It ought not to be difficult for you to say something straightforward about the Party or about the reasons for the meeting. Write down some matter-of-fact things, those remarks, for instance, you would make to your family. You can alter and revise your notes later.

If you are stuck, start off with some such sentence as one of the following. It will help or compel you to say something else:

This meeting has been arranged by . . . or—under the auspices of . . .

This meeting is called for the purpose of . . . or—to support . . .

I am glad to see there is such interest in our meeting . . .

If there is any topical event related to the Party or to the purpose of the meeting, make use of it.

Ordinarily the opening remarks of this part will be brief.

Part 2. In this part dealing with the subject, you will need to say something crisp and to the point. You are not giving the address, so your duty is confined to stressing the interest and importance of the subject in a few general observations. Note that in the model outline, comments are limited to three points. Very often there is a pamphlet, or book or journal you can consult for information.

(To be continued).

What Redistribution Means

(A Summary of the provisions of the Redistribution of Seats Bill. Price 3d.)

The Bill provides for four permanent Boundary Commissioners for the purpose of continuous review of constituencies in England, Scotland, Wales and N. Ireland.

Temporary Redistribution

The Boundary Commission for England, after the Bill becomes law, will forthwith review the twenty constituencies scheduled as abnormal on 1939 electorates. It will make recommendations for their sub-division as follows: Moseley, 2; Blackpool, 2; Altrincham, 2; Ilford, 2; Epping, 2; Romford, 4; S.E. Essex, 2; St. Albans, 2; Dartford, 2; Chislehurst, 2; Epsom, 2; Mitcham, 2; Harrow, 3; Hendon, 4; Uxbridge, 2; Twickenham, 2; Nuneaton, 2; Tamworth, 2; Horsham and W., 2. This means an addition of 25 seats and members.

The computations for this temporary redistribution are to be based on 1939 figures of electorates.

Where the areas are continuous, the area may be so divided that one or more of the new constituencies include parts of more than one existing constituency.

General Redistribution

When, under the Parliament Act of 1943, the Home Secretary is satisfied that sufficient staff and printing facilities are available, and declares that continuous electoral registration can function normally, the Boundary Commissioners will proceed to review all constituencies on the basis of their electorates at that time.

The total number of constituencies (excluding University constituencies) must not be substantially greater or less than 591. Scotland must have not less than 71 constituencies and Wales not less than 35. N. Ireland must have 12.

So far as may be practicable the electorate of single constituencies must not be greater or less than the electoral quota by more than approximately one quarter of the electoral quota of that time.

Double Member Seats

Provision is made for the sub-division of double member constituencies and in cases where the quota is less than

approximately 1.85 or more than 2.50 the area shall be divided into or among two or more other constituencies. Where the quota is less than 1.25 the constituency may be required to return a single member. In any other cases the constituency will be divided, unless after a local Inquiry the Commissioners in a particular case are satisfied that it is undesirable to divide an area.

After the first redistribution the Commissioners will make another report as to any or no redistributions required for their areas, not less than three years or more than seven years from the passing of the Act, and subsequently such periodic reports at similar intervals from their last previous report.

Thus the constituency electorates will be maintained at a fairly average normal for all Parliamentary elections.

(Concluded from page 4)

and everything except our responsibilities to the people of Britain and the Socialists of the world we ought not to boggle at the minor plagiarisms in their election handbook.

Sooner or later it will dawn on the camp followers of Common Wealth that it is a major political futility to waste time and energy on a mere nuisance-value organisation, yapping at the heels of the Labour Party which for nearly forty years has been working to set up a political machine to secure majority support for the common ownership of the wealth of the nation. Their Election Handbook shows a healthy respect for the Labour Party's electoral methods. When they have enquired a little deeper and have found that their conceptions of the Labour Party's policy and structure have been based on misinformation and misunderstanding, Common Wealth will fade away like its several predecessors which operated under various names for brief spells. They served to prove that a people's Movement must spring from the people and cannot be grafted on to them by the whims of a few individuals.

There is no room in Britain for ersatz political organisations.

Speakers' Forums Are Popular

By MARY SUTHERLAND (*Chief Woman Officer, The Labour Party*).

Among the most popular and successful activities of Women's Sections and Advisory Councils in the past few years, has been the Speakers' Forum. It was South-East Essex Labour Women's Advisory Council which made the first venture, and very soon the Forum "caught on." Every organisation which has held one Speakers' Forum finds a keen demand for more.

Any political activity which stimulates the interest of members in the work of the Party is worth encouraging, and it is therefore of interest to ask what is the value of the Speakers' Forum.

What is a Forum and how is it organised? The Women's Advisory Council or Constituency Federation which plans to hold a Forum, invites the Sections in its area to enter a team for the competition. Each team consists of four members: Chairman, speaker, and mover and seconder of a vote of thanks. Time limits are laid down: Chairman, five minutes; speaker, fifteen or twenty minutes; mover of the vote of thanks, three minutes; seconder, two minutes. As a rule a subject is prescribed, for instance, one of the Party's policy statements, though in some cases the choice of subject is left to each team.

Rehearsals

The competing teams have rehearsals at their own Section meetings. The date and place for the Forum is fixed, Sections in the area are invited to provide an audience, and members usually turn up in good numbers. In some counties where there is a large number of entries, various rounds are arranged in the areas and winning teams in the first round come to the final Forum.

After the teams are heard, the adjudicator announces the result, with helpful comments and criticisms. Marks are awarded to each member of the team. The whole thing has been a team effort, and the result is a team result.

In awarding marks, attention is paid to the following points: Pitch of voice (is the speaker heard at the back of the hall?); posture (is the speaker addressing the audience or the table?); use of notes (is the speaker too tied to notes and reading her speech?); construction

of speech; content of speech; did the Chairman really introduce the speaker and the subject?); did the speakers on the vote of thanks really move and second the vote of thanks?

Improving Quality

What is the value of the Forum? To judge the work of this activity by the number of new speakers it has is to miss the point. The purpose of the Forum is not to produce great orators, though it is likely that some of the women who have first found their voices (in public) as a member of a Forum team will some day be listed among those who have become known to their colleagues as "speakers." What the Forum can do and does do, is to improve the quality of our membership. It helps those who take part in it to tackle many jobs in the Party with more self-confidence—canvassing, discussions on Party business, carrying out official duties as local chairmen or secretaries.

It trains members to think clearly and to express themselves clearly. It encourages members to study policy statements carefully. It ensures that Party pamphlets are more thoroughly read and understood than they might otherwise be. It stimulates the critical faculties of members who are not taking part in the team, but have to form the audience at the earlier rehearsals. Members who have gone through this discipline, either as competitors in a team, or as an attentive audience, have really done something to make themselves more alert and better informed members of the Party.

One Subject

In my view the Forum contest is more valuable where a subject is prescribed for all teams. It is not really boring to listen to a number of speeches on the same subject; on the contrary, there is interest in noting and comparing different methods of dealing with a given subject in a limited time.

The Forum does encourage clear thinking, clear expression. It draws attention to faults of some members who are accustomed to speaking, and tend, as many speakers do, to use clichés, generalisations and padding.

(Concluded on page 5)

AROUND THE REGIONS

YORKSHIRE

The Regional Executive is giving consideration to the possibility of producing a regional weekly newspaper after the war. The "Leeds Weekly Citizen" is the only Labour weekly now published in Yorkshire, but Sheffield and Hull have their own Labour monthlies. Before the war there were quite a number of Labour publications, most of which were monthly sheets distributed gratis.

None of these papers did justice to the Labour cause because of their limited resources and small circulations. It is believed that if all these separate efforts were combined it would be possible to produce a really first-class weekly paper. The advantages of such a paper are summarised in the memorandum issued by the Regional Council:—

1. The Regional Council would have a means of contact with active Party members which it lacks at present. Decisions of the Council would be given wide publicity, and it would be possible to organise popular support for regional campaigns, e.g., Membership Campaigns.

2. Information of Party activities would be made available for the whole region. At the present what is happening in Hull or Leeds is known only in those cities.

3. Authoritative articles on Party policy would be published and a means provided for the frank discussion of controversial questions.

4. A well-produced, brightly written, weekly organ of the Labour Party in Yorkshire would improve the standing of the Party in the eyes of the public.

If sufficient support is forthcoming the Regional Executive proposes to prepare definite plans for the launching of the new paper as soon as possible after the coming of peace. A 12-page publication is visualised, issued in four local editions so as to give sufficient space to items of local interest.

WALES

Four One-Day Schools on Election Preparation have now been held with two sessions at each. The lecturers dealt with "Electoral Law" and "Election Organisation."

At Abergavenny, where the lecturer was Mr. Tom Baxter (Secretary of the

East Midlands Regional Council of Labour) there were 30 students present.

At Newport the lecturers were Coun. W. D. Hughes, J.P., Llanelly, and Alderman Tudor Watkins, Brecon, with 35 students present.

Cardiff had 42 students and the lecturers were Mr. R. H. Ley, of Newport, and Mr. Ben. Harcombe, Tonypandy.

Pontypridd had 77 students, when the lecturers were Mr. R. H. Ley, Newport, and Mrs. E. Andrews, J.P., Women's Organiser.

The many questions and high standard of discussion in the four schools reveal that the lecturers were well received and the students keenly interested and very enthusiastic.

A number of students indicated that they are anxious to take further training. We therefore hope that Transport House will find it possible to re-start its correspondence courses on Organisation, Election Law, etc., at an early date.

NORTHERN

To encourage members to take up public speaking, a Speakers' Forum contest has been arranged for the region. Each Divisional Labour Party has been invited to enter a team of four, i.e., Chairman, speaker, mover of vote of thanks and seconder. At least one member of the team must be a woman and at least one member must be 25 years of age or under.

The first round will be between teams in each separate county, thus contests will be held in the North Riding, Durham and Northumberland. The winning teams at the county contests will compete at an Inter-County contest.

For the first round the subject for the competition is a speech in support of a Local Government candidate in an assumed election campaign at the end of hostilities. The times allowed are as follow:—

Chairman	...	5 minutes maximum
Speaker	... 20	" "
Mover	... 5	" "
Seconder	... 3	" "

It has been made clear to the competitors that the adjudication will be made entirely on TEAM work and not on the ability of any individual. A number of Divisional Labour Parties have entered teams and there is every prospect that the contest will prove very successful.

EAST MIDLANDS

When the Regional Council was formed a little over a year ago, it was recognised that one of its biggest jobs would be to initiate or support campaigns within Trade Union branches to increase their political contracting-in memberships.

Apart from some general slackness in enrolling contracting-in members, due in no small measure to war-time pressure on many Trade Union branch officers, we felt that something must be done to propagate the value of "contracting-in" to the new generations of trade unionists. In the early days individual Socialists were always arguing the case for Trade Union political strength with their fellow Trade Unionists.

We began our campaign therefore by appealing to all individual members of the Labour Party to return to the job of working for a larger contracting-in membership. We found that lecturers were not so much wanted as workers who would undertake the job of getting the contracting-in forms signed.

Whilst all Trade Unions have contracting-in forms we concluded that it would be helpful if we published an application form on a card carrying a pointed propaganda story, together with a black and white illustration symbolising the industry concerned. We paid a good artist to produce us drawing and up to date we have supplied differently illustrated cards for four Midland Miners' Associations; the N.U.R.; the R.C.A.; A.S.L.E. & F.; Constructional Engineering Union; A.E.U.; Iron and Steel Trades Association; Boilermakers; E.T.U.; and Blastfurnacemen.

Many thousands have been produced and sold at about 29/- per 1,000 to Trade Union organisations. We are certain that good results will be achieved.

WEST MIDLANDS

Activity in the West Midlands Region is centred on the planning and organising of the Party machine for the possibility of an early General Election. Selection conferences are pending at King's Norton, Rugby, Worcester, Moseley, Burton-on-Trent, Kidderminster, Oswestry, Dudley and Walsall.

A series of seven area Day Schools is being organised for key workers and Party officers on "The Conduct of a General Election Campaign," and these

are to be held at Worcester, Birmingham, Coventry, Oxford, Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton and Stoke-on-Trent.

The Regional Office is also visiting each of the constituencies in the region for an intensive campaign to review the problems in each of the constituencies and with Party officers, to marshal key workers and support. A special conference between the Regional Officer and members of the Labour Group on the City Council to consider plans for the completion of the Panel of Municipal Candidates, the publishing of a municipal policy programme and a social gathering for all key workers when the Labour Councillors and Aldermen will act as hosts, and the Regional Officer will discuss with key workers the extension of Party activity and preparation.

In the sphere of Local Government, area conferences for Labour members on Local Authorities are being called to co-ordinate a policy between our members throughout the region. The first of these consultations was held at Dudley recently when the administrative problems arising from the new Education Bill were discussed and unanimous agreement reached for a common action by the members of all the authorities concerned in South Staffordshire.

SCOTLAND

A few days ago the 29th Annual Scottish Conference of the Labour Party was held in Glasgow, and as a reminder to those who think that Regional Organisation inside the Labour Party is a recent development it may be pointed out that the S.L.P. is nearly thirty years old.

The late Bob Smillie presided over the first Scottish Executive of twelve members, including James Walker, now a member of the National Executive, Neil Beaton, now President of the Scottish C.W.S., James Maxton, and Mrs. McNab Shaw, who is still President of the S.S.S. Movement and leader of the Labour Group on Ayrshire County Council.

At that first Scottish Annual Conference, away back in 1915, in the middle of another world war, it was decided to form a Scottish Council "to build up a better organisation of the Labour Party in Scotland." That was its declared purpose. Those terms of reference have never been changed.

Discussions at the Scottish Conference are confined to "Political aspects

of Scottish affairs and the domestic affairs of the Party in Scotland." On the whole, the organisations which comprise the Scottish Council find ample scope for their motions within these limits and, although each year a few exhibit considerable ingenuity in the weaving of words to slip in a motion on general policy by giving it a Scottish implication, the majority are more concerned to express views only on matters on which Conference opinion can have some practical effect.

For this year's Conference, for instance, out of 37 motions received, only three were out of order, leading with matters of general policy on which only Annual Conference should make declarations. The remainder are concerned with Scottish Housing, Scottish Education, desirable changes in the Law of Scotland and the machinery of the Party in Scotland.

The Party in Scotland has plenty to occupy its attention when it is remembered that there are 33 County Councils, 195 Burgh Councils, 71 Constituencies returning 74 Members of Parliament and territory three-fifths the size of England. Its systems of Law, land tenure and Local Government differ from those of England and Wales. Practically every piece of social legislation passed by Parliament requires a special Act for Scotland to conform with Scottish practice and conditions.

LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE

Those responsible for the creation of regional organisation in the Party had many objectives in mind, and of these the linking up of the powerful Area and District Trade Union organisations into active Party work was for the great industrial north-west of outstanding importance. In no other part of the country is Trade Union consciousness deeper or Trade Union influence greater, whilst the total membership must exceed that of most other regions in the country, and for these and other reasons it is doubly true in the north-west to say that the foundation of the Party is the Trade Union movement. The response of the Unions in 1938 on the formation of the Regional Council was most satisfactory, and by June, 1939, 25 Area and District Committees had affiliated on a membership of 309,000. During the ensuing five years every effort has been made by the Regional Council to contact other Trade Union organisations and at this year's annual meeting we shall report 70 affiliated Trade Union organisations

with an affiliated membership of 490,000.

Parallel with this activity with the Trade Unions the Regional Council has developed an ever-closer contact with the Co-operative Movement, and from an affiliation of two Co-operative organisations in 1939 with a membership of 11,000 we have increased in 1944 to an affiliation of the eight major Co-operative political organisations on a membership of 31,000 and the Council will, therefore, have exceeded its original target of an affiliated membership of half a million, by 21,000.

UNION NOTES

The Union's Executive has under consideration a suggestion to form its Scottish members into a "District." This proposal, first considered in 1921, has not become effective, but with more appointments it may be realised. When shall we have an Eastern Counties District or a Southern Counties District?

* * *

Union funds have substantially increased, but membership and income remain stationary. Both will, however, show an upward tendency as the approaching General Election increases the number of practising agents. Our energies must be bent on the more permanent employment of the agency staff.

* * *

The "L.O." for September was generally well spoken of by Union members. "It didn't look or seem any different" was the general comment. All's well. We are asked by the late Editor to thank innumerable writers, and especially those Parties sending in resolutions expressing good wishes and appreciation to him. These will be specially cherished by him.

Mr. J. W. Foster writes:—

The North-Eastern District have expressed their sincere gratitude to Herbert Drinkwater for services rendered to our paper, and especially because it has been found possible to make satisfactory arrangements for the "Labour Organiser" to continue. To have turned it over as a paying concern and with a higher circulation than when war broke out, Herbert has left a very high standard to be pursued. We feel confident that the National Executive Committee will be very anxious to continue the paper's close association with the National Union.

The Yorkshire District has been giving consideration to the reconstruction of the Union. It is proposing that the Districts should, in fact, become branches of the Union and not merely pieces of machinery to bring individual members together. The District then goes on to propose that the Annual Meeting of the Union should be based on delegations from the prospective branches and not, as at present, an Annual Gathering of Individual Members. So keenly do they feel this change to be necessary that the District is tabling resolutions thereon for the Annual Meeting of the Union. * * *

The Lancashire and Cheshire District have had several meetings recently to discuss the urgent problems of the day. Amongst these have been:

1. Party funds, coupled with the relationship of the Trade Unions and their political funds therewith,
2. The findings of the Speaker's Conference;
3. The resumption of Municipal Elections, and
4. Refresher Courses for Party Agents to rub off the rest of the war years.

Union membership in this area is requested to attend the District Meetings in large numbers.

Labour Party List of D.L.P. Alterations (September)

Index

No. Description. Name of Organisation.

G1	CD	Bedford D.L.P.
B15	DMB	Stockport T.C. & L.P.
B20	CD	Eddisbury D.L.P.
B22	CD	Macclesfield D.L.P.
F30	CD	St. Ives D.L.P.
G86	BD	Silvertown D.L.P.
G87	BD	Stratford D.L.P.
G93	CD	Maldon D.L.P.
B153	SB	Eccles D.L.P.
B190	CD	Darwen D.L.P.
L219	CD	Gainsborough D.L.P.
E226	BP	Bethnal Green N.E. L.P.
E226/27DB		Bethnal Green B.L.P.
E253	BD	Kennington D.L.P.
E255	BD	Norwood D.L.P.
E280	BD	Westminster Abbey D.L.P.
M332	CD	Banbury D.L.P.
M337	CD	Wrekin D.L.P.
J566	CD	North Midlothian D.L.P.
K588/9	U	Scottish Universities' L.P.

Present Secretary and Address.

Ald. H. E. WHITE, J.P., 13, Hardwick Road, Bedford.
THE SECRETARY, 117, Wellington Road South, Stockport, Cheshire.
Mr. J. HOCKENHULL, Jnr., Radmore Green, Spurstow, Tarporley, Cheshire.
Mr. A. TURNER, 5, Sherbrooke Road, Disley, Stockport, Cheshire.
Mr. A. G. A. JENNER, 26, Lannoweth Road, Penzance, Cornwall.
Coun. A. SOUTH, 2, Clifton Road, Canning Town, London, E.16.
Mr. B. LYONS, 6, Odessa Road, Stratford, London, E.7.
Mr. V. F. LEWIS, 24, Howard Road, Braintree, Essex.
Ald. Mrs. F. KERBY, St. Augustine's Vicarage, Pendlebury, Manchester, Lancs.
Coun. F. TAYLOR, 73, Greenway Street, Darwen, Lancs.
Miss N. K. WOOD, 83, Morton Terrace, Gainsborough, Lincs.
Coun. H. E. TATE, J.P., 5, Swinburne House, Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London, E.2.
Coun. H. E. TATE, J.P., 5, Swinburne House, Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London, E.2.
Miss D. WHITE, 37, Ferndene Road, London, S.E.24.
Mrs. G. B. DALTON, 5, Bradley Road, Crown Dale, London, S.E.19.
Miss M. GRIFFITHS, 43, St. George's Square, London, S.W.1.
Mr. W. E. HARVEY, The Bank, Upper Tadmerton Cottages, Tadmerton, Banbury, Oxon.
Mr. M. HARRISON, Morris Hall, Church Street, Wellington, Salop.
Mr. J. McRINER, 24, Calderhall Crescent, East Calder, Midlothian.
Mr. J. TAYLOR, 108, East Claremont Street, Edinburgh.

THE WAR-TIME ELECTION ACTS

The Services Declaration Card.

The cards for the Members of the Forces are of a buff tint and those for the Mercantile Navy (M.N.E.R.1) are of a blue tint, and those for war workers, green.

The card is of double postcard size, to be folded for transmission to the Registration Officer for the post town of the person's address. On the back of the card is Part 2 for the proxy appointment. This will be shown in a later section.

PART 1.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION (ARMED FORCES).

Army Form B. 2626

S. 1300 B.

R.A.F. Form 2040.

(If you are a British subject and declare to an address in Great Britain or Northern Ireland, these particulars are to enable you to vote, if or when you are 21 or over, at a parliamentary election for the constituency containing the address declared to.)

I HEREBY DECLARE THAT I:—

Surname..... Service.....

(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Christian Names

Service No. (if any)..... Rank or Rating.....

Am a British subject, and

*Am { 21 years of age or over.

*Am, not { (If under 21 years of age) was born on.....

Day	Month	Year
:	:	:

and reside or but for my service would reside at:—

(Full postal address)

I hereby cancel any previous declaration made by me.

Signed..... Date.....

Signature of Attesting Officer

Rank..... Ship, Regt. or Unit.....

* Cross out inapplicable words.

It will be noticed that provision is made for those under 21 years of age to make the declaration. Such declarations are reserved and as they mature, the persons become automatically registered as voters.

Every member of the Services who wishes to be included in the new Register of Voters must make a declaration, whether previously registered or not.

Sec. 8 (4).—A Service declaration which declares to more than one place of residence shall be void. Two or more declarations bearing the same date shall be void. A declaration bearing a later date shall, without any express cancellation, cancel a declaration bearing an earlier date.

Sec. 8 (7).—A person who is registered in the Service Register for any election shall be deemed for the purposes of this part of the Act and the principal Act (1918) to be registered in respect of a residence qualification.

MODE OF VOTING OF SERVICE MEMBERS

The implications of the provisions set out below may be summed up as follows:—

- Members of the Forces and Seamen and War Workers abroad, may vote by proxy. Those abroad can vote only by proxy.
- Members of the Forces in the United Kingdom may exercise an alternative entitlement to vote by post if they make appropriate application after the initiation of an election.
- Any Service voter may vote in person if happening to be in his constituency at the time of an election, whether having previously appointed a proxy or not, but if the voter has already applied for a postal vote, then he cannot vote in person but only by post.
- Members of the Services who are University Voters may vote by proxy.

Sec. 9 (1).—A Service voter may appoint a proxy to vote for him at any election for which he may be registered in the Service Register by virtue of his declaration.

(2) A Service voter, whether he has appointed a proxy or not, may vote in person at an election, but only if he applies for a ballot paper before a ballot paper has been issued to the proxy appointed, and in that event the appointment of proxy shall be void as respects that election.

(3) A member of the Forces, whether he has appointed a proxy or not, may elect, by notice to the R.O. in the prescribed manner and time after the initiation of an election to vote by post at that election and thereupon as respects that election the appointment of proxy shall be void and he shall be entitled to vote by post in the same way as an absent voter, and shall not be entitled to vote otherwise than by post. Provided that any such notice shall be void unless it gives an address in the United Kingdom to which a ballot paper is to be sent.

(NOTE.—The phrasing in the above paragraphs is a contraction of the precise legal terminology of the sub-sections. It can be understood that it all relates to the election for which a person is entitled to registration and a vote. The same remarks apply to various other paragraphs in this digest of the Acts.)

SERVICE VOTERS AND UNIVERSITY ELECTIONS

Sec. 18.—A member of the Forces or a seaman (or a war worker abroad) who is entitled to vote at a University election shall be entitled to appoint a proxy to vote for him.

The sub-sections provide for the completing of a declaration card of the ordinary sort: "Provided that the particulars to be stated in any such declaration shall not include particulars as to the residence of the declarant but shall in lieu thereof include particulars of the University constituency in which he is entitled to vote."

MODE OF VOTING OF CIVILIAN ELECTORS

Voting at Polling Stations.—By the provisions of the Third Schedule and Section 21 of the 1943 Act, the general enactments of the main electoral Acts apply, and persons whose names appear on the Civilian Residence Register, and on the Business Premises Register, are entitled to apply for ballot papers at their appropriate polling stations.

ABSENT VOTERS' LIST

Section 7 provides for the preparation of an Absent Voters' List, and any person registered in the Civilian Residence or Business Premises Registers may on application within the prescribed time after the day of initiation of an election have his name placed on the List if he satisfies the R.O. that by reason of the nature of his occupation, service or employment, he may be debarred from voting at the poll for that election.

Vote by Post or by Proxy.—The provisions of the principal Act (Sec. 23, which enable persons placed on the Absent Voters' List to vote by post or by proxy) shall apply to persons placed on the Absent Voters' list under this Act, subject to the modifications specified in the First Schedule of this Act.

NOTE.—The modifications refer to the entitlement being limited to the particular election for the present, and to entitlement being for a prescribed period when later normal regulations come into force.

ENTITLEMENT TO VOTE AND LIMITATION OF VOTES

Sec. 16 (1).—Subject to the provisions of this section, every person registered under this part of this Act for an election in any constituency shall be entitled to vote at that election: provided that nothing in this part of the Act shall entitle any person to vote if he is not a British subject, or is not of full age or is subject to any legal incapacity.

(2).—A person shall not vote at a General Election for more than one constituency (including a University constituency) other than that in which he is registered. . . . in respect of a residence qualification.

Thus at a General Election an elector, however many registrations he may have, can exercise two votes only, one for residence, and one for another constituency on account of University or B.P. registration.

(To be continued)



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